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ABSTRACT

Recommendations and guidelines developed by the American Historical Association for certification requirements for history teachers in secondary schools are presented. The guidelines are based on the conviction that teachers of history must be well versed in history. Requirements proposed in history and closely related subjects constitute one-half of the total requirement for undergraduates. Preparation in history requires a major of 30 semester hours. Preparation in subjects closely related to history (social and behavioral sciences and humanities) requires 18 semester hours, with additional study from history and closely related courses accounting for 12 hours. In addition to required education courses, 3 hours of the teaching of history and 6 hours of student teaching are recommended. Graduate study should consist of, for the most part, history courses. (KC)

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Guidelines for the Certification of Teachers of History

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Guidelines for the Certification of Teachers of History

Introductory Statement

From its inception, the American Historical Association has had the improvement of the teaching of history in the schools as one of its important concerns. In its early years, it showed this concern through recommendations for history curricula, including content, materials and methods of teaching. Beginning in the 1950s, the Association has sponsored conferences on the teaching of history in the schools and has published pamphlets designed to update secondary-school history teachers with regard to new knowledge and interpretations of history.

In recent years, the Association has become increasingly concerned about the preparation of history teachers for the secondary schools. Teachers of history must be able to teach far more than a collection of facts, for history is far more than such a collection. History is a record and interpretation of the past of mankind, leading to the present and pointing to the future. The record and interpretation are loaded with intricate developments and controversies. History is a discipline with methods of its own for discovering and interpreting knowledge. To lead students to learn about the developments, controversies, and method of history, teachers must themselves be steeped in knowledge about these matters. All too often, the history teacher has very little acquaintance with them.

The comprehensive certificate in the social studies, the holder of which is allowed to teach any of the dozens of courses included under the heading of social studies, falls far short of assuring that the teacher of history will be qualified to teach the subject. The current popularity of the "approved program approach" to the development of certification requirements brings together schoolteachers, professional educators, and academic scholars.

State guidelines sometimes recommend that those who develop the programs submitted for approval testify that they have given careful attention to the recommendations of learned societies as to the certification of teachers in the subjects that are of special interest to the societies.

The American Historical Association has had many requests for its recommendations for certification requirements for teachers of history in the secondary schools. It publishes these guidelines out of its conviction that teachers of history must be well-versed in history and in the hope that the recommendations will be useful to those who draw up certification requirements for the states.

Guidelines

The requirements proposed are given in semester hours of credit. The intent of the requirements should be met by institutions that award credit through other means, such as quarter hours, term hours, courses, and half-courses. The requirements proposed in history and closely related subjects constitute one-half of the total requirement for graduation. A significant part of the recommended requirements can be met through the institutional requirements in general education.

I. Preparation in history.

The prospective teacher should have a major, or its equivalent, in history. This major should constitute at least one-fourth of the requirement for graduation. To insure breadth of view, it should include study distributed both chronologically and geographically. To provide depth of understanding of both history and its study, it should include several advanced courses. Specifically, it should include the following:

A. American history

1. General study or equivalent through advanced placement 6 hours
2. Advanced study 6 hours

B. Other history

1. Western civilization or equivalent through advanced placement or world history 6 hours
2. Non-Western civilization(s) or world history 6 hours

C. Additional study 6 hours

II. Preparation in subjects closely related to history.

History is closely related to both the social and behavioral sciences and the humanities. The teacher of history should have substantial understanding in both areas. There is considerable disagreement as to the relative value of breadth and depth of study in these fields. Under this heading, these guidelines provide to some extent for both. Under the following heading they make possible the extension of either or both, as well as of the study of history.

A. Social and behavioral sciences

Study in three subjects chosen from anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology 9 hours

B. Humanities

1. Initial study of literature and philosophy 6 hours
2. Additional study in one of these 3 hours

III. Additional study chosen from history and the closely related

subjects listed above, to include at least one course that deals primarily with an American culture group other than the future teacher's own 12 hours

IV. Professional preparation for teaching history.

We assume that the study of social and psychological foundations of education should be the same for all secondary-school teachers. However, we endorse the recommendation in the Cole and Pressley statement that one three-hour course be required in each of these areas.

- A. The teaching of history 3 hours

We do not believe that it is possible to give adequate consideration to curriculum development and teaching methodology in history through a course in teaching the social studies that purports to deal with these matters in six or seven disciplines and various combinations of these disciplines and other matters.

- B. Student teaching, all or principally in history . . . 6 hours

Graduate Study

Many teachers of history will continue their study in graduate school. We believe that they should do so. Many considerations will enter into their decisions as to the precise nature of that study. We do not believe that the states should specify its exact content. However, teachers of history, as such, should not be enabled to improve their certificate status or their salaries as a result of graduate study only marginally related to their teaching responsibilities. While some graduate study in the social and behavioral sciences, the humanities, or education may be helpful in carrying out those responsibilities, programs of graduate study which improve certification status or salaries for teachers of history should consist, for the most part, of history.